United Nations A/C.1/54/PV.20

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Official Records

First Committee
20th Meeting
Monday, 1 November 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. González ..... (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Crash of an Egyptian aeroplane

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to ask all members of the Committee to observe a minute of silence for the very regrettable crash that occurred yesterday involving an Egyptian aircraft. There were many casualties in that sad tragedy, and I ask members to stand and observe a minute of silence for the victims.

The members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As I informed members of the Committee at our meeting on Friday, 29 October 1999, this morning the Committee will proceed to take decisions on the draft resolutions that appear in the Chairman's paper in the following sequence: cluster 1, nuclear weapons, draft resolutions A/C.1.54/L.24 and A/C.1/54/L.36; cluster 2, weapons of mass destruction, draft resolutions A/C.1/54/L.11 and A/C.1/54/L.26; and cluster 3, draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22. The draft texts I have not mentioned are still the subject of consultations.

Before continuing, I should like to repeat the procedure I outlined on Friday for this stage of the Committee's work. At the outset of each meeting, delegations will have an opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions. I will then call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements or comments, not explanations position or vote, on the draft resolutions in a particular cluster.

Thereafter, delegations may proceed to explain their position or vote on the draft resolutions before a decision is taken.

After the Committee has taken a decision on a draft resolution, I will call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the particular draft resolution on which a decision has just been taken.

Thus, delegations will have two opportunities to explain votes or positions on a particular draft resolution: either before or after a vote is taken on a draft. In accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make statements of explanation of vote. They can make only general statements on clusters of draft resolutions at the beginning of a meeting.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, I would again urge those delegations wishing to request a recorded vote on a particular draft resolution kindly to inform the Secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins its action on the relevant cluster.

With regard to any postponement of action on any draft resolution, delegations should inform the Secretariat in advance. Every effort should be made to refrain from resorting to a postponement of action.

I hope these procedures are clear to all delegations.

00-39250 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I call first on those delegations wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions, if any. There appear to be none.

I now call on delegations wishing to make general statements on draft resolutions contained in cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons". There appear to be none.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to make some procedural announcements relating to the process.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): As delegations may have noticed, informal paper No. 1 has been distributed. This will assist delegations in voting by letting them know how many draft resolutions will be taken up and in what sequence.

Regarding informal paper No. 1, there has been a request for draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.23 to be postponed. There has also been a request to postpone draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.43. Therefore, this morning the Committee will take up draft resolutions A/C.1/54/L.24, A/C.1/54/L.36, A/C.1/54/L.6, A/C.1/54/L.11, A/C.1/54/L.26 and A/C.1/54/L.22.

An informal paper will be distributed at every meeting which will list all draft resolutions to be taken up. For instance, this afternoon there will be another list.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their vote or position on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.24 before a decision is taken.

There appear to be none, so the Committee will proceed directly to the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.24.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.24, entitled "Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)", was introduced by the representative of Mexico at the Committee's 16th meeting, on 26 October 1999. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.24 are listed in the draft resolution itself.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.24 have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.24 was adopted.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call upon those representatives who wish to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted. I see none.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36. I call first on those representatives wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

There appear to be none.

Mr. Al-Ahmed (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Secretariat will take the necessary steps to include Saudi Arabia among the sponsors.

We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", was introduced by the representative of Pakistan at the Committee's 19th meeting, on 29 October 1999. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36 are listed in the draft resolution itself and in document A/C.1/54/INF.2. In addition, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Myanmar and Saudi Arabia.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, India,

Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36 was adopted by 77 votes to none, with 50 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Zambia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Lee Kie-cheon (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to make a few comments on the draft resolution just adopted. The primary issue regarding negative security assurances centres on the question of through whom and in what form such assurances will be given. With respect to countries that are to receive assurances, my delegation has upheld the principle that non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that fully comply with their obligations, in particular with those contained in articles II and III of the NPT, have a legitimate right to receive assurances from nuclear-weapon States that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. Nuclear-weapon States have a corresponding obligation to assure non-nuclear States that are faithfully complying with the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These mutual responsibilities, conditions for all States parties to the NPT, will doubtless contribute to strengthening the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

On the issue of form, my delegation has considered the options expressed by those who favour a single legally binding instrument and those who favour bilateral and other approaches. Our firm belief is that all States should seek a practical solution acceptable to all.

My delegation decided to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution, as we do not feel it adequately reflects these concerns.

Ms. Kunadi (India): India has consistently maintained that the only credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons lies in their total elimination. Until this objective is achieved, as an interim measure and as one that complements other measures to reduce nuclear dangers, including de-alerting, we believe that there exists an obligation on the part of States possessing nuclear weapons to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use of such weapons. This obligation should be of an internationally binding character, clear, credible, universal and without discrimination.

No delegation is opposed to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances in the Conference on Disarmament. Such an ad hoc committee will be an essential element in any balanced and comprehensive programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament next year.

For its part, conscious of its responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State, India has stated that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons against nuclear-weapon States and that it remains willing to strengthen this undertaking by entering into bilateral agreements on "no first use", or multilateral negotiations on global "no first use".

As we have stated that we will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, there remains no basis for their use against countries which do not have nuclear weapons. India respects the choice exercised by non-nuclear-weapon States

in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned and remains willing to convert this commitment into a legal obligation.

Mr. Luck (Australia): Australia considers that pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, consistent with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), negative security assurances are an essential reinforcing element underpinning the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Australia considers that those countries that are non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, that have renounced the nuclear-weapons option and that are in full compliance with their NPT obligations have a legitimate claim to credible, comprehensive and effective negative security assurances from the five nuclear-weapon States. Negative security assurances are also an important inducement for the States still outside the NPT to accede to the Treaty, and Australia continues to hold the view that only States willing to assure the security of others by becoming parties to the NPT should benefit from negative security assurances.

Regrettably, the failure of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36 to give due primacy to the particular claims and interests of States parties to the NPT in this regard prevented Australia from supporting the draft resolution.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): South Africa abstained in the voting on this draft resolution.

The South African Government strongly supports the granting of legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This position has been demonstrated by our actions and by the proposals which South Africa submitted in the context of the strengthened NPT review process. In addition, South Africa submitted to the third session of the NPT Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference a draft protocol on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

These actions underpin South Africa's belief that security assurances are an integral part of the NPT bargain, by which the non-nuclear-weapon States have undertaken a legal commitment not to aspire to these weapons.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has again demonstrated its inability to successfully address this issue as well as other issues related to nuclear disarmament. As was the case with resolution 53/75, adopted last year, this year's draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36, just adopted, does not take account of these views, which prompted my delegation to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Committee has thus completed matters relating to cluster, in view of the postponements of action on some draft resolutions. We shall now proceed to cluster 2.

I shall call on those delegations wishing to make general statements on draft resolutions contained in this cluster, "Other weapons of mass destruction".

There appear to be none. The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.6.

I now call on those delegations who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.6.

There appear to be none. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.6, entitled "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes", was introduced by the representative of Burkina Faso on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States at the Committee's 19th meeting, on 29 October 1999. Guyana has also become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.6 have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.6 was adopted.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of India, who wishes to explain India's position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation has requested the floor after the adoption of this draft resolution without a vote to state its position with regard to operative paragraph 8.

India has been fully supportive of the central objective of this draft resolution and has therefore joined the

consensus. India was one of the few countries which supported the retention of the issue of radiological weapons on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, as it believes that the international community must remain vigilant to the grave dangers posed by nuclear or radioactive waste and the possibility of its military use.

Operative paragraph 8 of the draft resolution refers to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. As a developing country, India attaches great importance not only to the safety but also to the full utilization of all aspects of the fuel cycle to derive maximum benefits. Therefore, spent fuel is not waste but a valuable resource, a position that India has been consistently supporting at the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", was introduced by the representative of Canada at the Committee's 19th meeting, on 29 October 1999. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11 are listed in the draft resolution itself.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The sponsors of this draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11 was adopted.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on those delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): Egypt has traditionally supported all measures leading to the promotion of international and regional stability and has always committed itself to engage in constructive action in the fulfilment of that objective. It is in that spirit that we cannot but sympathize with the general thrust of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11, as it addresses a global instrument which aims at prohibiting a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical weapons, thus giving the Chemical Weapons Convention its effective, important impact in the field of disarmament, as opposed to non-proliferation.

Nevertheless, Egypt would like to stress once again its well-known position vis-à-vis the Convention and its implications in the Middle East region. Our commitment, explained vividly, towards the prohibition of chemical weapons and all weapons of mass destruction is best exemplified by President Mubarak's 1990 initiative on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, underscoring the following elements: first, a total prohibition in the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction without exception, be they nuclear, chemical or biological; secondly, that all States in the region should make a solemn declaration, without exception, of reciprocal commitment and obligation in this regard; and, thirdly, that measures for verification of full compliance must be underscored.

The Security Council expressed support for our initiative in resolution 687 (1991) and again in 1992. In July 1991 Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, in his letter addressed to the Secretary-General, explained that priority must be given to freeing the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction and to increasing the security of the States of the region with a lower level of armament, as well as to the realization of equal and reciprocal security for all States in the region, not through a qualitative edge, nor through military superiority but through dialogue, negotiations and a deep commitment to peace, equality and security for all.

Although Egypt participated actively in the long and arduous negotiations which took place in the Conference on Disarmament and which led to the elaboration of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, its position has been voiced since day one, at the time of the opening for signature in January 1993 by the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed, our position emanates from and is firmly based on our regional considerations and concerns. For a long time now, Israel has been repeatedly stating on various occasions and in various forums that the application of this Convention should include all States in the Middle East region within a mutually acceptable verification mechanism. However, Egypt has declined to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention until Israel joins the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and we urge Israel to apply the same argument it seems to advocate, and in fact employs, with regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Despite all these considerations, my delegation did not request a recorded vote on this draft resolution. However, we do not consider ourselves to be part of any consensus decision taken on this draft resolution today and would like to register our reservation on the content and letter of operative paragraph 5.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is very satisfied to see that once again the Committee has been able to adopt the draft resolution on the Chemical Weapons Convention without a vote.

Cuba, as a party to the Convention and a current member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), will continue to work intensively to promote the timely and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. Although operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution the Committee has just adopted welcomes the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, I should like to place on record my country's concern over the lack of an agreement defining the relationship between the United Nations and the OPCW in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

More than three years have elapsed since the entry into force of the Convention, but we still have not been able to finalize an agreement between the two organizations. In Cuba's opinion, this dangerous legal vacuum should not be allowed to continue indefinitely. Bearing in mind that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has already prepared a draft agreement, the only way of securing the prompt implementation of this process is to guarantee the direct and transparent participation of the Member States of the United Nations in the consideration of the draft agreement, and this participation will have to be followed by the preparation of a final agreement acceptable to both organizations.

Ms. Kaundi (India): The Indian delegation wishes to state its position on certain aspects of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

As we stated in the general debate, India, as an original State party to the CWC, has endeavoured to discharge fully and faithfully its obligations under the Convention. There remains a continuing responsibility of all States parties to the CWC to ensure that all its provisions are implemented fully and effectively. It is a matter of collective concern that some States parties have, despite voicing support for the Convention, not provided full declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), adversely affecting the inspection schedules. We hope that this situation will be redressed as soon as possible.

The Chemical Weapons Convention, the first multilateral disarmament agreement of a universal character eliminating a complete class of weapons of mass destruction, offered an opportunity to put in place a multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory legal mechanism that will simultaneously address proliferation concerns emanating from unregulated transfers, while at the same time promoting the economic development of the States parties.

The CWC, under article XI, placed an obligation on States parties to review their export policies, as a measure to prevent the spread of chemical weapons and equipment for purposes contrary to the objectives of the Convention. However, the persistence of certain ad hoc control regimes creating a dual category of States parties within the CWC stresses the need for the early implementation of all provisions of the CWC to safeguard its long-term viability and effectiveness.

Mr. Shafqat Ali Khan (Pakistan): Pakistan has been an ardent supporter of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are satisfied to see the progress being made in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague on the effective implementation of this landmark Convention.

We support the broad thrust of the draft resolution which has just been adopted. However, in the context of the theme expressed in operative paragraph 7 we have some concerns. My delegation, to begin with, is not fully satisfied with the manner in which negotiations for a relationship agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW have been conducted, and it is precisely for this reason that a relationship agreement between the two organizations is yet to be finalized.

In the spirit of compromise, we have not pushed for the inclusion of a particular reference reflecting this reality in the current draft, but my delegation reserves the right to raise this issue in other appropriate forums.

Mr. Shahsavian (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation is happy that draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11 was adopted without a vote. My country attaches great importance to the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I should like to add my voice to the

concerns raised by some delegations about operative paragraph 7. We are seriously concerned about the stalemate on a relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), an agreement which in our view is very important for facilitating the work of the OPCW.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We have concluded our consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11.

The Committee will now take proceed to action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26.

I shall first call on those members of the Committee wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

There appear to be none. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26, entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons", was introduced by the representative of Belarus at the Committee's 17th meeting, on 27 October 1999. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26 are listed in the draft resolution itself and in document A/C.1/54/INF.2. Egypt has also joined as a sponsor.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26 have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26 was adopted.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call upon those representatives wishing to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted. There appear to be none.

The Committee will now move on to cluster 3. Does any delegation wish to make a general statement on any draft resolution contained in cluster 3?

I see none.

We shall now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22.

If no delegations wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting, we shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", was introduced by the representative of Sri Lanka at the Committee's 16th meeting, on 26 October 1999. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22 are listed in the draft resolution itself and in document A/C.1/54/INF.2. The following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Côte d'Ivoire, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan,

Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:
None.

Abstaining:
Israel, United States of America.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22 was adopted by 138 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Kuwait and Zambia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their vote or position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Although the United States agrees with some elements of the draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", we believe it also includes provisions that are overstated or unwise. Accordingly, the United States abstained, as we did last year.

There is unprecedented peaceful cooperation in outer space, and we have every reason to believe that this pattern of peaceful cooperation will continue. It seems evident, indeed almost incontestable, that there is no arms race in outer space. Military uses of outer space enhance international peace and security and have broad advantages for the international community. Practical examples include treaty compliance and monitoring, the global positioning system, refugee tracking, counter-terrorism and sanctions enforcement.

For all these reasons, the United States does not believe that the international community needs to undertake an active and energetic effort to prevent an arms race in outer space, nor that the task is urgent. Nevertheless, with a view to getting down to work in the Conference on Disarmament on such issues as a fissile material cut-off treaty, my Government has indicated some flexibility related to discussion of outer-space issues in an appropriate forum. Any such discussion would have to examine topics and proposals on their merits and without preconceptions. We hope that the ideas by former Conference on Disarmament President Dembri, and the good work of outgoing and incoming Presidents Luck and Kreid, will help us find our way forward.

Mr. Donaldson (United Kingdom): My delegation has requested the floor in order to give an explanation of vote on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and on behalf of Germany regarding the decision on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

Although our delegations have supported the draft resolution, we want to make sure that our votes will not be misconstrued when the subject of outer space is addressed at the 2000 session of the Conference on Disarmament. In the past, both the United Kingdom and Germany have actively contributed to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on outer space and have also formulated a number of proposals. Unfortunately, it was not possible to achieve a consensus on any of the proposals that were discussed at the time.

The United Kingdom and Germany recognize the continued validity of the subject. We are therefore ready to support consideration of an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the re-examination and possible updating of its mandate, with an open mind and in a constructive manner.

It remains our view that the Conference on Disarmament has other important work to do in 2000 which should be given high priority. Above all, our delegations are committed to an early start on negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty at the beginning of next year's session. For this reason, we wish to make it clear that our positive votes on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22 should not be understood as endorsing agreements in advance to any particular model for a subsidiary body to address this issue. We will participate in the discussion on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work in a constructive spirit, and we are ready to re-examine the question of the most appropriate way to deal with the issue of outer space in the light of the aspects I have just mentioned.

Mr. Becher (Israel): Israel would like to say a word in explanation of our position on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11. As it has done in previous years, Israel once again joined the consensus on the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". Israel signed the Convention and took an active role in the endeavours to shape it into a workable mechanism. By

doing so, Israel reflected its vision of a world free of chemical weapons.

In signing the Convention, Israel expressed its hope that other countries in the region would soon follow suit. Among those are countries that are known for the use of chemical weapons in the past and are believed to continuously strive to improve their chemical capabilities. Unfortunately, none of those countries has either signed or ratified the Convention, and what is more, have indicated collectively that they would not change their position even if Israel ratified the Convention.

The reason Israel has not yet ratified the Convention relates to Israel's unique political environment. At the signing ceremony in 1993, Israel made it clear that it would seek to ratify the Convention subject to its regional concerns. These considerations remain no less valid today as Israel has entered into significant negotiations in a process to bring peace and security to the Middle East.

What Israel has stated here must not be construed as prejudging the outcome of Israel's decisions on ratification or of Israel's continued support of the Convention. Positive changes in the security climate in the Middle East will affect Israel's attitude on the ratification issue.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Before proceeding I, as Chairman, would like to make the following statement.

When the process on a particular draft resolution has been completed — when all delegations have expressed their views and the Committee has moved on to another draft resolution — a delegation should not explain its position in respect of draft resolutions on which decisions were taken earlier. The Chair wishes statements to be made only on draft resolutions that are being considered.

At present I have two requests to speak in explanation of vote; I take it that they relate to draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26. We have already completed action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.11. If these statements do indeed pertain to draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26, then please feel free to explain your positions but I ask members to kindly make their requests early enough to be heard during the consideration of the draft resolution that they wish to address. So on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26 I call on the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Forquenot de la Fortelle (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like briefly to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". France voted in favour of this draft resolution, as did many other countries. I should like to recall that our positive vote does not prevent France from being dedicated here to what was called in Geneva the Dembri compromise, which included provisions on outer space. We sincerely hope that the decision that will be taken at the next session, that is, in January 2000, will take that compromise into account to the greatest extent possible, so that on outer space, as on nuclear weapons, we will have a compromise that comes very close to the Dembri compromise and will make it possible to give cut-off negotiations a good start at the very beginning of the next session.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Does any other delegation wish to speak? There appear to be none. Taking into consideration all the requests to defer consideration of other draft resolutions that we had originally planned to consider this morning, I would say that we have worked little but well. I hope that this augurs equally well for the coming days.

We have thus completed our consideration and adoption of all the draft resolutions allotted for this meeting.

Before concluding, I call on the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor first to thank the Secretariat for all the efforts it has been making to facilitate the work of delegations. In that context, I should like to ask the Secretariat whether it would be possible to have the informal paper distributed one meeting in advance. It is a very useful document that considerably facilitates the work of delegations and allows them to take a position. As long as the Secretariat has this information in advance, would it not be possible to have the document distributed one meeting before the Committee takes action? That would be of enormous assistance to delegations.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I can assure the delegation of Algeria that the Secretariat will make every effort to bring that about.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.